



# The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, January 28, 1988

Published Since 1877



## Guest opinion . . .

## When did Jesus' ministry begin?

By Jerry Vardaman

Cobb Institute of Archaeology  
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Scholars have debated for many years concerning the chronological problems of the Bible, and of these questions few have been more difficult than to discover solutions to the year when Jesus started his ministry and the time of Paul's activity in Damascus. In II Corinthians 11:32, Paul tells us that while he was there, Aretas (IV) had an ethnarch who controlled the city and tried to arrest Paul but that the apostle escaped by being let down over the wall of Damascus and going elsewhere.

The purpose of this note is to let readers of this publication know of a new investigation which offers welcome new light on this matter. In 1985 I had the privilege of spending a month in the Coin Room of the British Museum in London and, during the course of my study of ancient coins, noted a misattribution (as I took it) of a coin in that great collection. I say "great collection" because, as far as I am aware, no collection of ancient coins assembled anywhere in the world exceeds the quality nor quantity of that institution. And it is not quite accurate for me to say misattribution, for as far as the description goes in the British Museum Catalogue of this coin (see below), it is accurate. The BM Catalogue (Greek Coins, Gal., etc. p. 283, no. 4) simply lists the coin as being struck at Damascus in the "time of Tiberius." The danger here is that the reader will jump to the conclusion from what is said of this coin in that Catalogue, that it was struck by Tiberius.

Nike is frequently shown on coins of Damascus and our present example is no exception. The reason she is shown on this coin is due to the victory which Germanicus had just gained over the Germans in A.D. 15/16. These German victories led to Germanicus' appointment to the east, and he was finally stationed in Antioch in Syria as supreme Roman commander of the area before his death in A.D. 19.

We should now say more about Aretas IV, under whose authority this coin was made. The reader should remember that Aretas is the only king, outside members of the Herodian family (Herod I, Agrippa I, Agrippa II) who is mentioned in the New Testament. He was the father-in-law of Herod Antipas as we learn from Josephus. Josephus also informs us that wars came about between Herod Antipas and Aretas when Antipas divorced Aretas' daughter (whom we think was named Phaelis) in order to marry Herodias. We would date An-

tipas' divorce from Phaelis around A.D. 17/18 and his marriage to Herodias in the same year: so Antipas and Phaelis were still married when this coin was struck.

In any event, the coin was struck in Damascus in A.D. 16. The key lesson to learn from the enlarged drawings shown here is that the coin was not struck under the authority of Tiberius, however, but under Aretas. We know that he ruled from 11 B.C.-A.D. 37 (though most scholars assign him to the years 9 B.C.-A.D. 39). The symbol shown behind Tyche's head on the front of the coin is not a "star" but a monogram meaning "Year one of Aretas." On many Nabatean coins a similar abbreviated system is used and so the diemaker of the coin well understood what the symbol meant as did the owners of the coin, when they used it. It is just that previous students of Aretas and his career have not recognized the importance of the coin for determining when he controlled Damascus. Afterwards, Tiberius obviously took over Damascus again around A.D. 33 and resumed striking coins there. (See Schurer, *History of Jewish People*, new ed., 1975, I, p. 582, note 25).

The majority of NT scholars today do not allow a control of Aretas over Damascus until the first year of Caligula (A.D. 37-41). This is the Roman Emperor that most students of NT history believe returned Damascus to Nabatean control. An earlier Aretas (known as Aretas III) had controlled Damascus between approximately 85-62 B.C. And the coins of Aretas III show a similar scene to what is shown on this coin on the reverse — the goddess of Victory (Nike) extends a crown of victory in her hand. The main reason Victory is shown on this coin is due to the victory Germanicus had just accomplished over the Germans in A.D. 16, but another reason could be the fact that the earlier Aretas had used the same symbols on his coins when he controlled Damascus. So Paul's conversion was between A.D. 16-33 since Aretas obviously did not control Damascus until A.D. 15/16, but lost control by A.D. 33.

The coin is full of microletters and these small letters are of great importance. The Old Testament warns us not to despise small things (Zechariah 4:10). In these microletters a great deal of information is contained and in my fuller study of this coin soon to appear I will expiate at greater length on such details which space does not permit here. Suffice it to say that several times Jesus of Nazareth is

mentioned, and if I mistake not, his first year of ministry is referred to as follows (not always in the same order, nor, as full each time):

"Year one of Jesus of Nazareth in Galilee [sic!], King, the Righteous One (=Just One)"

The letters appear in Latin and Greek primarily, but here and there, also, Aramaic. My own studies in chronology had led me to this approximate date for the time of the ministry of Jesus to begin, but I was two years off! I allowed for the ministry of Jesus to begin in A.D. 17 (see *Biblical Illustrator*, Winter 1985, pp. 12-16, esp. p. 13), but now have moved to the year A.D. 15/16 as being the more likely. I have tried to make this article as short as possible and refrain from giving more than this essential information at this point. In the above article, I had dated Paul's conversion to the approximate time of A.D. 24-27, and the numismatic evidence is not contrary to that broad date either, but very agreeable to the same when correctly understood.

One final comment is perhaps appropriate. Before one reacts in a negative way to the absolute "absurdity" of the idea that people in Damascus could have known of Jesus during his first year of ministry, it should be realized that is no further from Damascus to Capernaum, and that region where Jesus was doing most of his miracles in his time (Matthew 11:20-24) than it is from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Actually, I will let others try to explain such an "incredible" phenomenon. I am only stating here what the microletters allow. At the same time I am fully conscious of the far-reaching implications of these few obscure, but precious, scribblings. We are thus reminded again that "God hath yet more light" (to quote John Robinson) to break forth from, and on, his Word to aid us in understanding it. Jesus was obviously much greater in his personality than writers like G. A. Wells allow (see his *The Historical Evidence for Jesus*, Buffalo: Prometheus, 1982, in which he denies that Jesus ever lived!). And this is what Matthew also tells us about Jesus — a fame of him went throughout all of Syria (see Matthew 4:24) at a very early point in his ministry.

Jerry Vardaman is a professor at Mississippi State University in the Cobb Institute of Archaeology.

See the writer's forthcoming article on "Damascus" in the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*.



The writer is preparing a much longer note on this coin and other evidence to be published in a new book coming out (dealing basically with Nativity studies) through Eisenbraun's Press in Winona Lake, Indiana. Here I am simply trying to alert students of the Bible to this new research, which has great help for those seeking to understand its message better. Here we show a drawing of the coin under consideration, and we give both its obverse (front) and reverse (backside).

## Barclay commentaries sent out all across Soviet Union

MOSCOW, USSR — The anticipated 5,000 sets of Barclay Commentaries arrived on Dec. 21 at the headquarters of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCELB). Their Christmas journey began at the United Bible Societies warehouse in Stuttgart, Federal Republic of Germany. The translation of the 15-volume series was the work of the Baptist World Alliance, the European Baptist Federation, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the AUCECB in the Soviet Union. The unprecedented official permission in 1987 to import the commentaries follows the trend of openness which is taking place in the Soviet Union.

Anatoly Sokolov, director of the press service of the AUCECB, said "it is really a nice Christmas present." The 75,000 individual copies have already been distributed throughout the USSR by the superintendents of the various areas.



# Editorials . . . by Don McGregor

## Lottery is inefficient

The Legislature is in session again, and so there will be occasions for looking at the output of the prolific imagination of that body. That is not a statement of sarcasm. There is an average of about 3,000 bills introduced in any given year. Many of them are very good. Some are not so good.

We will try to delineate the difference on those bills that we feel are of interest to Baptists particularly.

Three need to be called to attention at this point in the session. One, HCR 4 by Charles Capps, has already been mentioned. It would amend the constitution to permit a state lottery. This bill has been assigned to the House Constitution Committee. Edwin Perry is the chairman.

The lottery issue continues to come up and will continue to do so. Yet we don't need a lottery. If we need more money for state government, and that is the only reason that could be given for wanting to have a lottery, we could handle that need more efficiently and at less expense simply by raising taxes. With a tax increase, all of the money would go into the state treasury. With a lottery there is a lot of money spent, much more than a tax raise would involve, and most of it would go to pay winners, pay ad-

ministrative expenses, pay some outside firm for equipment, and be siphoned off in other ways before any of it ever got to the state.

Two new bills would allow for the advertising of alcohol. One is H 247 by Daniel Guice, and the other is H 352 by Grice and Wm. Mitchell Ellerby. Both have been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee. The new chairman of that committee is Thomas H. Walman.

The only reason for advertising anything is to sell more of it. We surely don't need to sell more alcohol. Mississippi is officially a dry state. The wet areas in it are areas that have voted to come out from under prohibition. If one of these bills were passed, alcohol advertising would be legal in wet and dry areas alike. That does not seem reasonable.

Representatives and senators can be reached by phone by calling 359-3770. They can be addressed by mail at P. O. Box 1018, Jackson, Miss. 39215-1018.

Those who might be tempted to consider a state lottery as an easy form of taxation need to be reminded that there is only one winner at a time in a lottery. Big payoffs make the news, but a payoff of \$10 million would re-

quire that tickets be bought totalling something like \$30 million. The state might get \$7.5 million. So there would be \$12 million or so coming out of the pockets of many individuals that would be left doing neither the state nor any individual winner any good. It would be swallowed up in administrative expenses and whatever else it might be siphoned off into.

It's just not worth it.

Since the above was written we have learned that two additional bills were filed on Friday of last week that should be considered. One is H 406, which would provide a nonbinding referendum on a state lottery. It was submitted by Rep. Vecchio and has been assigned to the Rules Committee. Regardless of any referendum, at this point a lottery would take a constitutional amendment.

The other bill is SH 413, filed by Rep. Endris. It would authorize gambling aboard a vessel in Mississippi Sound. It has been assigned to the Ways and Means Committee. If that issue were to become law, the dam would have been broken; and there would be no way to stop the rush of gambling in Mississippi Sound or anywhere else in the state.

### ONLY ONE CHANCE IN MILLIONS SHE'LL WIN

- THOSE WHO CAN LEAST AFFORD IT PURCHASE LOTTERY TICKETS.
- LOTTERIES FEED ORGANIZED CRIME.
- A GREAT AMOUNT OF THE INCOMING MONEY IS CLAIMED FOR PROMOTION AND SUPPORT OF THE LOTTERY ITSELF.
- LOTTERIES INCREASE THE NUMBER OF COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS.



## Capacity voyage

A call to the Baptist Record has revealed a bit of erroneous information that was published in relation to the gambling ship, the Europa Star, that is berthed at Biloxi. An editorial had indicated that not many people were on the trip the night that the Baptist Record was there to take pictures of Mississippi legislators boarding the ship. A reader called to say that he had made the trip that night and that the ship was about filled to capacity. He indicated that the tickets

had been sold in advance. We will take him at his word. The Baptist Record representative did not board the ship.

The ship sailed at 7 p.m. We were there from 5:30 until 7:30. We saw very few people going on other than legislators, but we don't know how many were on the ship prior to our arrival.

The caller indicated that the ship is equipped to make the trips family oriented by offering entertainment other than gambling alone. — Editor

## Guest opinion . . .

### What's the hurry?

By Grady C. Cothen

The recent actions of a few members of the Christian Life Commission and the Public Affairs Committee illustrate the plight of the Southern Baptist Convention. Recently it seems to have been relegated to rubber stamping the plans made for it by its politically oriented leadership. The latest violations of Baptist polity clearly indicate something is amiss besides "liberal theology." Without discussion by either agency involved, a select few members began a series of actions that clearly violates the bylaws of one and the usual procedures of both. At least one of these actions has been declared illegal by the convention attorney. All of them seem hasty, ill-considered, and designed to do something in a hurry before anyone can do anything about it. Southern Baptists have never done business this way before!

This effort to grab the Christian Life Commission by members of the Public Affairs Committee and a few cohorts in the commission raises again loud and persistent alarms.

1. Why the hurried attempt to change the way the convention has operated for generations?

2. Why should the joint functions of

both groups be brought under the control of a few people who are attempting to undermine the decision of the last Southern Baptist Convention concerning the Baptist Joint Committee?

3. Why this effort to purge the agency executives who have served on the Joint Committee with steady influence for years?

4. Why could not any decision about these bodies wait for full and open discussion by the members of the governing bodies and the constituency?

5. Why the perversion of time — honored Baptist procedures?

6. Why the rush by a few men to take charge of Southern Baptist's social and political agenda?

7. Why has the PAC (Public Affairs Committee) suddenly become the PAC (Political Action Committee)? The endorsement of Judge Bork for the Supreme Court — a signal of things to come?

It would seem that orderly procedure has been abandoned by the leaders of the convention. Clearly these efforts cannot be termed as saving the convention from liberal theology. There seems to be something here previously unknown to Baptist life. It appears that the con-

vention agencies are being set up for manipulation by forces that did not constitute them for purposes the convention did not intend. We see here matters of power and control, not theology and missions.

There are contained in the present struggle some strangely recurring themes. A careful look will reveal that much of the language of the few is that of the secular New Political Right. The agenda is strangely similar to that which has been promoted by the right wing political coalitions — abortion, purging the public schools, government support of private schools, the feminist movement, government enforced prayer in the schools, and the vision of a "Christian America wrought by government. Whatever one's opinion of this list of causes, the last of these represents a denial of the gospel and in fact repudiates the work of Christ.

Could it be that the CLC and the PAC have been delivered into the hands of the new political right? A careful look at membership of this small group is very interesting. Could it be that the rush is caused by the desire of the politicians outside the convention wanting a religious voice in Washington, speaking in the name

of Southern Baptists, in time to influence the presidential election and the candidacy of Pat Robertson?

It is time that people who are committed to being Baptists took note that it may be almost too late to salvage the world's greatest missionary force from becoming a tool of outside politicians who are really not interested in who and what we are. Sidney Blumenthal wrote in 1984, "the evangelical New Right has systematically seized control of the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention . . . altering long-held theological positions for political advantage." Apparently, they want what God has created for their own purposes. This issue has little or nothing to do with whether one is a moderate or a conservative. To make a virtue of neutrality on this one may be to volun-

tarily surrender our convention to outside forces.

If this analysis is accurate, we don't have long. If it is inaccurate, a little time will demonstrate that and give all concerned an opportunity to participate in a constructive decision in our usual Baptist way — slowly, deliberately, argumentatively, following the bylaws that were designed to prevent this kind of usurpation of authority.

Grady Cothen, of Pass Christian, Miss., is the immediate past president of the Baptist Sunday School Board. He is also past president of New Orleans Seminary and Oklahoma Baptist University and a former executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of California. He has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Birmingham.

May 17, 1887, Pingtu

" . . . such a mission, once set going, could be carried on annually at a cost of six thousand dollars. Wouldn't such an investment pay better, say, than twenty-five thousand dollars contributed by one man for a memorial church in a city already saturated with churches? Why can't we have a

'Memorial' mission? When will some such Baptist come forward and start a mission which would give the gospel to some hundreds of thousands of people? When will some churches say, 'We will sustain one missionary in Pingtu,' and not only say it, but raise the money and send the missionary?"

— Lottie Moon.

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## Evangelism Conference to feature Pollard, Lewis

The Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference kicks off next Monday evening a round of preaching and gospel singing aimed at offering church staffers spiritual growth.

The conference, this year offering only preaching, music, and short testimonies, begins Feb. 1 at 7 p.m., at Parkway Baptist Church, Jackson. It concludes at 11:20 a.m., Feb. 3.

Keynote speakers include Esther Burroughs, Manuel Scott Sr., Larry Lewis, Frank Pollard, O.S. Hawkins, Tom Elliff, Perry Sanders, and John Bramlett.

Burroughs is national evangelism consultant with women for the Home Mission Board. Scott is pastor of Saint

John Missionary Baptist Church, Dallas. Larry Lewis is president of the Home Mission Board. Pollard is pastor of First Church, Jackson. Hawkins is pastor of First Church, Ft. Lauderdale. Elliff is pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla. Sanders is pastor of First Church, Lafayette, La. And Bramlett is a former professional football player who is now a public speaker.

Special music will be brought by Russell Newport, Alan Celoria and family, Jay and Martha Richardson, and Graham Smith. Newport is a soloist from St. Louis. The Celorias live in Jackson where he is a music evangelist. The Richardsons are

members of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton. and Smith is the newly-elected director of the MBCB's Church Music Department.

Other speakers include Pete Pearson, Tommy Snyder, Don Rhymes, and Maurice Flowers. Pearson, pastor of Sardis Church, Smith Association, will speak on the value of revival preparation. Snyder, pastor of Calvary Church, Greenville, will speak on church renewal. Rhymes, minister of evangelism at First Church, Jackson, will discuss witness training. And Flowers, director of missions for Jones Association, will speak on lay evangelism schools.

## Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is lifeblood for home missions

By Kathy F. Berry

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Construction workers and farmers — they are but two groups of workers among the nation's "new poor."

Construction workers in oil-depressed areas now lack work where towns and communities, once overflowed with growth and job opportunities. Out in the country, fields now stand fallow where farmers' combines once rumbled with productivity.

As these workers experience economic crisis in their lives, they find themselves in the new, and awkward, position of having to ask for help.

One place they're finding that help is through Southern Baptist ministries in their communities and neighborhoods — funded by the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

A national goal of \$37.5 million has been set for the 1988 offering. If that goal is met, Southern Baptists can continue to provide needed ministries.

But if the goal isn't reached, people with real names and real faces will be turned away.

That's something Pat Mustoe, director of the Baptist Community Center in Austin, Texas, doesn't want to see happen. From October 1986 to October 1987, Mustoe provided 2,453 families with food, clothing and money to help pay the rent and utilities.

Without funds from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, that help wouldn't have been possible.

In New York City, home missionary Ted Mall meets needs of a different sort as he shares Christ with diplomats from 159 nations at the United Nations. Again, the funds come from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

The Language Missions Division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board alone needs \$8.4 million from the offering to support the work of 1,300 missions personnel who minister, witness and start churches among 84 of America's more than 200 ethnic groups.

At least \$3.2 million is earmarked for specific projects, such as \$320,000 for mission work in Puerto Rico and American Samoa, or \$200,000 to aid church planter apprentices in their work.

One such church planter apprentice, Dennis Culbreth, pastors the Rolling Hills Chapel, which meets in a rented warehouse in Wrentham, Ga., aerobics exercise studio for Sunday School and worship.

Although this Bible Belt section of the country abounds with Southern Baptist churches, members of this mission in Gwinnett County — the nation's fastest-growing county — represent the area's predominantly young, professional, transplanted Northerners who often don't feel comfortable amidst traditional Southern Baptist services.

This mission, and other missions throughout the Southern Baptist Convention, provide alternatives for new Southern Baptists. But their work would suffer without support from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Another \$5.6 million of the offering amount is designated to assist the Church Extension Division of the Home Mission Board as it undergirds the work of 1,200 missions personnel. State and associational leaders such as Pamela Mungo, director of church extension for the Baptist Convention of New England, are the ones who put

that money to use.

"If Southern Baptist churches are going to grow up here, the only way is through starting churches," Mungo insists. By 1993, this convention of 143 churches and missions aspires to have 300 congregations serving the six-state area.

Some of the Annie Armstrong offering funds are needed for "special missions" ministries, with \$890,000 earmarked to meet needs in creative ways. For example, Linda Hokit and Fran Cook will minister at Canada's 1988 Winter Olympics by coordinating the Calgary Winter Games Ministry.

Sponsored by the Midwest Association of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists, the ministry will link the area's existing 5,300 Baptists with volunteers from the continental United States to provide an evangelistic witness during the Olympics. They'll provide chaplaincy services, hospitality ministries, entertainment, crisis counseling, child care and street witnessing.

The largest portion of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, \$27.2 million, is needed to support more than 3,690 home missionaries and their field ministries. Another \$7 million is needed to reach millions of people in metropolitan cities for Christ.

But despite the great need, some Southern Baptist churches have yet to do their part to provide a church for everyone. More than 9,000 of the approximately 37,000 Southern Baptist churches gave nothing to the 1986 offering, at all.

Of those churches who did give, the average amount given was only \$254. Kathy Berry writes for WMU, SBC.

## Acteen will meet in Tupelo to "celebrate!"



Williams

Smith

The Mississippi Acteens Convention is set to convene at First Church, Tupelo, March 3-4.

Girls and their leaders will participate in this weekend conference, using the theme, "CELEBRATE!"

Highlighting the convention will be Kay DeKalb Smith, singer-comedienne from Nashville; and Dottie Williamson, home missionary from Chesterfield, Va.

Features include an emphasis on mission action opportunities, an Acteens Activators Commissioning Service; Queens' banquet; missionary speakers; and an emphasis on STUDIACT, the individual achievement plan for Acteens.

For information concerning motels, and registration, contact the Woman's Missionary Union office, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

## Southeastern

## Search committee told changes not needed

By R.G. Puckett

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Alumni, students, administration, and faculty of Southeastern Seminary have told the school's presidential search committee they neither see the need nor have the desire for any changes in the 37-year-old seminary.

Robert D. Crowley, chairman of the trustees and its search committee, responded by comparing that attitude to the Middle Ages before the Renaissance, when Europeans were satisfied with things as they were.

The search committee held its first full meeting on the seminary's campus here Jan. 21-22 to develop a profile for the school's fourth president.

W. Randall Lolley announced his plans to resign from his 14-year-presidency in October and made it official Nov. 17 in a special meeting of the full board of trustees.

Sharp exchanges took place between some trustees and students, faculty, and alumni during the recent search committee meeting.

Beverly Hardgrove, president of the Student Council, accused some trustees of running ahead of the procedure outlined in seminary documents, giving some groups advanced opportunities for input as to the type of person and his or her style of leadership.

The accusation, voiced by others, partially was prompted by reports in the secular media that 19 people had been nominated and five were considered front runners.

"If the profile has not been determined, how can there be front runners?" Hargrove asked.

Todd Ackerman, staff writer for the Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer, was asked about the sources of materials for some of his articles and the opinions expressed in them, such as the phrase "front runner."

Crowley said he had never indicated front runners and only confirmed the names Ackerman had included in his article. Crowley shared the names of nominees with the entire body of trustees, he added.

"Perhaps you need to check with 30 trustees to find out who leaked information to the secular press," Crowley said.

Also, an exchange of letters between Crowley and Lolley was made public in January through the secular media. "I certainly did not make the correspondence public, and I challenge the person who did to have enough integrity to admit that they gave copies of the letters to secular reporters," Crowley said.

(Continued on page 10)



## Christian Action Commission officers

These are the officers of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. From left they are Charles Myers, chairperson, Jackson; Mrs. Annette Hitt, vice chairperson, Jackson; Mrs. Stuart Calvert, secretary, Ashland; Paul Jones, executive director-treasurer, Clinton.



# Growth attitude part of Union's heritage

By Tim Nicholas

Center, Miss., was the county seat of what are now Hancock, Stone, and Pearl River Counties. In its heyday, there was a stove mill, saw mill, and turpentine works.

The Baptists came in in 1845 asking the Methodists if they would share their building. Big mistake for Methodism. The Baptists held a revival and the Methodists — even the Methodist minister — were all baptized. Says G.A. McCoy, pastor of the Baptist church there, "There has not been a Methodist church in the area since."

When the yellow pine played out, the town died. But the church lived on. The aggressive attitude toward growth that subsumed the Methodists is a big part of its survival and its thriving today.

The church is Union Baptist, the name coming from the union of the two denominations, in what is now the Caesar Community. Caesar was a local Indian chief and the church itself is built over old ceremonial grounds.

Even though the area is practically a New Orleans bedroom community and a number of children are staying on the old home places, "I don't believe we'd grow if we didn't plan for it," says McCoy.

The first time McCoy was pastor at Union — 1959-63 — he's been back since 1974 — the church became involved in a pilot growth project through the Home Mission Board. The church agreed to grade the Sunday School and Church Training programs, go on the envelope system, and improve its financial situation. In the creation of new units, "that's when the growth really began. In 1963 we were averaging 250 in Sunday School," says McCoy.

When McCoy returned to the church in 1974 from other pastorates and a teaching stint in Jackson, the grading system had lapsed and enrollments were declining. "We started building again on sound Sun-

day School principles," he says.

"We began to grow again," McCoy says.

Staffers were added and the church's kindergarten has three classes. A recent Sunday saw 357 in Sunday School with 36 in the homebound ministry.

"Our people have always had a desire to grow. They support it with their presence, their money, their talent," says McCoy, who credits an earlier, longtime pastor, S.P. Powell, with laying a "grand foundation." Says McCoy of Powell, "He built in to the people a real vision. When he would organize a committee, he would expect them to do the work."

That work ethic remains. The church has just finished building a full size gym with 13 classrooms, a commercial kitchen, two shower/restrooms, an office suite, and a conference room. The metal masonry, and underground plumbing were contracted out, but the church men did the rest.

Working nights and weekends, the

job took 18 months. With \$300,000 in the building, McCoy estimates it worth about \$700,000. Built through a campaign directed by the MBCB's Stewardship and Cooperative Program Promotion Department, the unit was debt-free two months after completion.

The church is holding two morning worship services with Sunday School sandwiched in between. But they're running out of room already. In October, they started three or four new classes and will be holding an enlargement campaign with Gulf Coast churches in February.

There's an accelerated teacher training program to provide new teachers for new units. Equipping center usage includes about 135 members who have completed the Masterlife discipleship course. So far, nine have finished the leader program called Masterbuilder. And the Masterdesign discipling program is being used in home Bible studies and during Church Training.

There is an intercessory prayer

group with 30 people who pray for the sick, lost, and during tragedies.

And the missions groups are growing. McCoy points to a lot of growth in the Brotherhood which, he says, "is a missions organization like its supposed to be. They do missions; they don't just study missions." There are three Royal Ambassador groups, GAs, Acteens, Mission Friends was recently reorganized, and McCoy says they are working on developing a more active Woman's Missionary Union.

The visitation program is varied and the homebound ministry includes taking tapes of Sunday services into the homes.

The church began Parkview Chapel in 1976 which has been a church for five years. And they're starting a mission in the Anchor Lake development about four miles from the church. The convention board has bought the property through state mission offering funds and will provide the chapel trailer. The church bought the Parkview property and built it

themselves. Don Windham, a retired NASA engineer is pastor of the mission.

Such awareness of ministry and its opportunities has struck deep into the lives of the church members. Retired director of missions Marvin Lee is a member. Former member Jimmy Lowe was in the mission service corps. Cecil Jones and Keith Hill went out as pastors. And there are two each at Clarke College, William Carey College and seminary preparing for ministry.

"This church has always produced preachers," says McCoy. "The only thing I can attribute it to is a loving fellowship."

McCoy admits that a growth consciousness must begin with the pastor. "He's got to be willing to work from daylight to dark and after. And then I think he has to develop people who have a vision, keep a challenge before them. He's got to be out ahead of them seeing what the needs are, and encourage them into a growth consciousness."



G.A. McCoy

## Colo. Baptists stop paper

DENVER (BP) — The Colorado Baptist General Convention has suspended publication of its 7,500-circulation, twice-monthly news publication, the Rocky Mountain Baptist.

In a letter to subscribers, Charles E. Sharp, editor of the paper and CBGC executive director, wrote: "It is with regret that we announce that the Rocky Mountain Baptist will no longer be published by the Colorado Baptist General Convention." The last issue was Dec. 10, 1987.

Sharp also noted, "It is hoped that we will be able to resume publication in the future."

It is believed the suspension of publication of the Rocky Mountain Baptist is the first time a state convention newjournal has ceased publication this century, although several of the state Baptist

newspapers did reduce frequency of publication and size of the papers during the depression and war years.

The Colorado convention has been in economic difficulty since 1985, when two corporations of the CBGC — the Colorado Baptist Foundation and the Colorado Church Loan Corporation — suffered significant financial losses.

The two organizations were set up to raise money and then loan it to Southern Baptist churches in the state. The foundation began to experience losses as early as 1981 as a result of poor return on "over-the-counter" stock investments. The foundation assets were frozen in February of 1985.

An audit in mid-1986 showed the losses of the foundation totaled \$1.2 million.

Since Sharp became executive in

January of 1985, the convention has worked to pay off investors and bondholders. The convention has since eliminated several staff positions — including the newspaper's editor — cut back on the frequency of the newspaper, refinanced its office building, obtained a loan from the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board, and re consolidated its debts into a single loan.

The Rocky Mountain Baptist, he said, cost about \$32,000 annually.

With the elimination of the publication, Sharp said about 2,500 pastors and church leaders will receive a monthly newsletter, Colorado Baptist Leadership, which includes promotional material as well as some state and national Baptist news.

The leadership publication, he said, is done completely in-house, and will cost about \$18,000 annually.

## ACTS

SATELLITE NETWORK, INC.

Effective January 25, 1988

CT	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
5 <sup>00</sup>	Joy of Music Gloria	Sgt. Preston Bill Cosby Show	Adventures of The Lone Ranger 26 Men	Great Churches of America (II)	In Concert	Great Churches of America (II)	Family Foundations Sunday School Lesson
6 <sup>00</sup>	This Is Life Westbrook Hospital	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Davey and Goliath Outdoor Theater
7 <sup>00</sup>	First Love Wendell Estep Changed Lives	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Profiles Sunshine Factory	Word of Life Sunshine Factory	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Catch the Spirit Sunshine Factory	Sunshine Factory Sgt. Preston of the Yukon
8 <sup>00</sup>	ACTS Methodist Hour	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Lone Ranger Cartoon Adventures of The Lone Ranger
9 <sup>00</sup>	Come Alive Nelson Price	One in The Spirit Sgt. Preston	Catch the Spirit Sgt. Preston	This Is Life Come Alive Nelson Price	Joy of Life Perry Sanders In Concert	Christian Lifestyle Gospel Church of America (II)	Popcorn Theater
10 <sup>00</sup>	Catch the Spirit FBC, Richmond	Bill Cosby Our World	26 Men What's Happening	What's Happening	What's Happening	What's Happening	26 Men
11 <sup>00</sup>	Great Churches of America (II)	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Jimmy Houston Outdoors Outdoor Magazine
12 <sup>00</sup>	The Baptist Hour	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Profiles Sunshine Factory	Word of Life Sunshine Factory	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Catch the Spirit Sunshine Factory	Popcorn Theater
1 <sup>00</sup>	Sunday Selection	"	"	"	"	"	Family Foundations Sunday School Lesson
2 <sup>00</sup>	Profiles	COPE	COPE	COPE	COPE	COPE	Davey and Goliath Outdoor Theater
3 <sup>00</sup>	Love Worth Finding Adrian Rogers	Psychiatry and You Sunshine Factory	Psychiatry and You Sunshine Factory	Psychiatry and You Sunshine Factory	Psychiatry and You Sunshine Factory	Psychiatry and You Sunshine Factory	Sunshine Factory Sgt. Preston of the Yukon
4 <sup>00</sup>	Joy of Music One in the Spirit	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Shippy, the Bush Kangaroo Lame	Lone Ranger Cartoon Adventures of The Lone Ranger
5 <sup>00</sup>	Making Life Count Arthur Calandro The Life	Adventures of The Lone Ranger 26 Men	Great Churches of America (II)	In Concert	Great Churches of America (II)	Sgt. Preston Show	Popcorn Theater
6 <sup>00</sup>	Insight	What's Happening Life Today	What's Happening Life Today	What's Happening Life Today	What's Happening Life Today	What's Happening Life Today	Country Crossroads
7 <sup>00</sup>	Gloria	Profiles	Word of Life	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Catch the Spirit	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	In Concert
8 <sup>00</sup>	The Baptist Hour	Joy of Music Ron Herrod	Catch the Spirit Joy of Life Perry Sanders	For These Times Robert White	Invitation to Life	Strength for Life Ken Hemphill	Great Churches of America (II)
9 <sup>00</sup>	Richard Rogers	COPE	COPE	COPE	COPE	COPE	Family Foundations Sunday School Lesson
10 <sup>00</sup>	Joy of Music Gloria	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	The Baptist Hour	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	Davey and Goliath Outdoor Theater
11 <sup>00</sup>	This Is Life Selection	Adventures of The Lone Ranger 26 Men	Great Churches of America (II)	In Concert	Great Churches of America (II)	Sgt. Preston Show	Sunshine Factory Sgt. Preston of the Yukon
12 <sup>00</sup>	Profiles	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Life Today	Popcorn Theater
1 <sup>00</sup>	ACTS Methodist Hour	Profiles	Word of Life COPE	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	Catch the Spirit COPE	Prime Time Sunshine Factory	26 Men
2 <sup>00</sup>	Gloria	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	Ecce Theater	Jimmy Houston Outdoors Outdoor Magazine
3 <sup>00</sup>	Sunday Selection	"	"	"	"	"	Plant Groom David Wade
4 <sup>00</sup>	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

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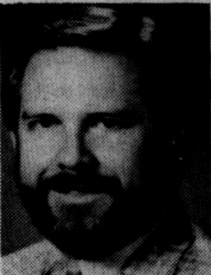
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# Words: blessing or curse

By Randy Tompkins

A wise man once said, "Make sure what they heard you say is what you said." His point is well taken. We seem to rush through life picking up only parts of speech and sounds. Many times our imaginations lead us to hear something that has not been said.



Tompkins

As the radio crackled to life, the familiar voice of Paul Harvey came through the speakers. During the next several minutes Harvey recounted the story of a 14-year old who was placed behind bars. From almost the very first hour, the lad began to mystify the authorities by escaping from every confinement in which he was placed. It seemed nothing would stop the lad from obtaining his freedom.

The one flaw seemed to be his inability to continue his freedom past a few moments or hours after his escape.

After leaving his confines, he would wander openly down a street or alley in full sight of everyone around. Once captured and confined, he would simply work his wonder and be free again. Solitary confinement, even with chains, was no match for this brilliant escape artist.

As Harvey wove the tale of the wandering lad, a feeling of sorrow that such a brilliant boy needed to be locked up overcame the listener. From the story presented over the air waves, the lad was not acting unruly once free from his fetters. The listener was led into searching for the one thing.

Harvey was not revealing. Then in the last few moments of the broadcast Harvey announced the lad was not a boy but an orangutan being locked up in a zoo. The play had worked. The listener had been led to express a feeling for an animal that usually was reserved for another human. How had this happened? A carefully placed word here and an omitted phrase there seemed to take the listener down a path in the wrong direction.

In condemning the misdirections of the Pharisees (*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.* Matthew 12:37) Jesus placed before us a powerful truth that must not be taken lightly. The truth is this: **THE SPOKEN WORD, OR OMISSION OF IT, CAN CARRY A BOUNTIFUL BLESSING OR A DREADFUL CURSING.** It all depends on how the words are used.

We should not have to be concerned that a fellow Christian would say something that would not be trustworthy and honest. I have seen many a Christian businessman look with a scant eye toward a prospective supplier or client when a phrase such as "Well, I'm a fellow Christian myself" suddenly appears in the negotiations. Too many times a "fellow Christian" has not spoken truthfully and honestly.

Whether we are laymen or ministers, our conduct and speech ought to be such as to reflect the meaning behind Colossians 4:6: *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."*

Randy Tompkins is a consultant in the Sunday School Department, MBCB.

## Lucille Parker, artist, dies in Hattiesburg

Lucille Parker, noted Mississippi artist, died Monday morning in Hattiesburg.

Funeral services were Wednesday at Hulett-Winstead Funeral Home in Hattiesburg, and burial was in Hattiesburg.

Horace Kerr of Nashville, supervisor of the Senior Adult Section of the Family Ministry Department of the Sunday School Board, and Ralph Noonkester, president of William Carey College, were in charge of the services.

Kerr was a brother-in-law of Miss Parker. His wife is the former Dot Parker. Miss Parker is survived by her sister, Dot, and three brothers. They are Jack of St. Simons Island, Ga.; Travis of Hattiesburg; and Carl of Sumrall. Carl is a representative in

the Mississippi Legislature.

Miss Parker was head of the Art Department at William Carey College until her retirement. She was an art professor also at Judson College in Alabama earlier. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by William Carey College in the same ceremony in which Leontyne Price, former Metropolitan Opera star from Laurel, was so honored. She had been active in presenting lectures and shows all across Mississippi and was active in the senior adult group at First Church, Hattiesburg.

Miss Parker designed the large needlepoint tapestry that hangs in the lobby of the Baptist Building in Jackson. The tapestry gives recognition to the work of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

## Carlton to lead Northside seminar

John W. Carlton, professor of preaching at Southeastern Seminary from 1969 until his retirement last summer, will be the guest lecturer at the Northside Church, Clinton, annual winter seminar. Carlton will be speaking on the subject "Preaching and Worship." The seminar is scheduled for Jan. 29-31.

The seminar will be at Northside Baptist Church, 1475 Northside Drive, Clinton. The Friday night session begins at 7 with a fellowship hour to follow. Saturday evening the church will host a red beans and rice supper at 6 with the lecture at 7. Carlton will preach Sunday morning at 8 and 10:30. Childcare will be provided.



## Music Conference elects officers

These are the officers of the Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference. Seated from left are Farley Earnest, minister of music at First Church, Brandon, vice president; J.M. Wood, minister of music at Broadmoor Church, Jackson, consultant; Dot Pray, MBCB Church Music Department keyboard specialist, secretary-treasurer; standing, Ken Miller, minister of music at First Church, Natchez, president; and Mike Edwards, minister of music at North Oxford Church, Mississippi Singing Churchmen representative. Not pictured is James Hayes, minister of music at First Church, Hattiesburg, president-elect. Hayes reports that the 1988 meeting of the conference will take place at First Church, Vicksburg, March 10-11.

## Briarwood Drive has "Why Wait?" meet

Briarwood Drive Church, Jackson, will sponsor a "Why Wait?" Mother-Daughter Seminar/Tea on Jan. 31, 1:30-5 p.m.

The seminar, presented by Mississippi Teens for Life, will focus on the value of saying no to sex before marriage. Associate pastor Thomas Winn reports that "Viewpoints will be delicately expressed by qualified female speakers sharing the physical, emotional, and spiritual reasons for waiting."

Cost is \$5 per person. For details and to register, contact the church at 956-4561. Dress is semi-formal.

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## Names in the News



Coopersville Church, Morton, recently honored Jimmy Huffman for 22 years of service in Sunday School work. For 16 years Huffman served as Sunday School director at Coopersville and previously served six years as director at Cross Roads Church, Rankin County. Prentiss Sessums Jr., who serves as deacon at Coopersville presented on behalf of the church a 16 year Appreciation Folder to Huffman and a Certificate Of Awards for 22 years service in Sunday School work.

Pictured, left to right, are LaVerne Summerlin, pastor; Jimmy Huffman, center; Mrs. Jimmy Huffman, music director at Coopersville.



Calvary Church, Greenwood, recently honored several of its Sunday School members with perfect attendance pins during the Sunday morning worship service.

Pictured, front row are Joe Reid Corley, 2 yrs.; back row, Philecia Corley, 3 yrs.; Bennie Corley, 3 yrs., and Melanie Jefcoat, 8 yrs.

Joe Reid, Bennie, and Philecia are the children of Mr. and Mrs. Donnie Corley and Melanie is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Jefcoat. Joe Reid has missed only one Sunday since his birth. Presenting the pins was Roy Hancock, Sunday School director.

### Senior Adult Corner

A national discipleship conference for senior adults on prayer and the devotional life will be offered May 2-5, at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C.

Herschel Hobbs, author and pastor emeritus of First Church, Oklahoma City, will lead the evening worship services.

The senior citizens of Zion Church, Pontotoc County, met in September to organize a program for the older adults. The group met with an average attendance of 14 in October, November, and at the December meeting they voted to name themselves the ZIONEERS.

Officers elected were Ailene Brandon, president; Edith Monts, vice-president; Marjorie Cox, secretary-treasurer; and Delphia Merritt, program chairman.

Camp Ground Church, Water Valley, Yalobusha Association recently presented four perfect attendance pins for Sunday School to Annette Goodwin, Barbara Warren, Tammie Kelley, and Christy Methvin.

A dedication service was held for the new activities building just completed, and "Christmas in Song" was presented by the choir under the direction of Ed Shearer III. Lloyd Defer is Sunday School director and Eugene Barnett is pastor.

Parkway Church, Jackson, held its deacon ordination service on Jan. 10. Deacons ordained were Chris Ball, John Ballard, Lamar Gordon, Randy Hayman, Ben Hogan, H. E. Little, Lennis Little, Carroll Mangum, Willie Richardson, Dan Stubbs, and Gary Ward. Bill Causey is pastor.

CHEVY CHASE, Md. (BP) — Julia Lowe, Southern Baptists' oldest retired foreign missionary, died Jan. 1 at the age of 103.

She and her husband, Clifford, spent more than 30 years doing pioneer mission work in southern China beginning in 1908. It was one of the most tumultuous periods of China's history, but only World War II forced the Lowes to come home.

They retired in 1948 but kept speaking for missions in churches and Baptist meetings. He died in 1963 at age 80. Mrs. Lowe continued her ministry in Nashville and later here.

She prayed daily for missionaries. Despite failing eyesight and hearing in recent years, she also wrote letters regularly and taught Sunday School at Wisconsin Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, until early 1987.

She was asked by a young man: "What do you have to do to live such a long life?"

"I told him never in my life had I had a glass of any kind of alcoholic beverage, and I have never smoked a cigarette," she said in a 1984 interview. "But that's not what has given me a long life. It is God that does it. That's what I tell everybody. It's the Lord. It's because of his will. I belong to him."

## Senior Adult enrichment rallies planned across state

Most of the Senior Adult Enrichment rallies have been changed from the dates and places of those previously announced, according to J. Clark Hensley, senior adult consultant with the Church Training Department.

Emmanuel Church, Grenada, (not Greenwood) will host a Senior Adult Rally on Feb. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in Area III, with Hensley and J. Barry Worrell as resource persons. The conference fee will be \$3 per person including lunch. Reservations are to be made through J. Barry Worrell, Highway 8 and 51, Grenada, MS 38901 by Feb. 18. The fee is payable at the door. The meeting theme is "Finding a Better Way."

Clarke College will host Area VI on March 29 with Lavon Moore and Hensley as resource persons. Reservations for lunch should be made by March 28 through the office of the dean, James Reed, Clarke College, phone 601-683-2061. The registration fee of \$4 includes lunch.

Area IV meeting will be held at Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville, on April 5, 9:30-2:30. The theme is "New Dimensions for Senior Adults." Hensley and Lavon Moore will serve as resource persons. Reservations for lunch should be made by April 4 by preregistering with Lavon Moore, Box 188, Kosciusko, 39090, or phone 601-289-6059.

First Church, Hattiesburg, will host a South Mississippi Senior Adult Rally on April 29, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Coordinators are Billy G. Johnson, Hattiesburg, and Tom Myers, Prentiss, from Area VIII; Bob Williams, Gautier, Area IX; and Glen Williams, McComb, Area VII. Resource persons for the day will be Horace Kerr, manager, Senior Adult Section, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.; Ferrell Blankenship, director of Broadcast Services, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board; Hensley. The theme for these sessions will be "Achieving Wholeness in Later Life."

More details will be given later. Contact person for these is Billy G. Johnson, Route 9, Box 1814, Hattiesburg, 39401, telephone 583-9392.

Area II (Northeast Mississippi) meeting will be hosted by Lee Baptist Association at Sherman on May 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. with Charles Stubblefield, Tishomingo, and Hensley, as resource persons. The registration fee of \$3 includes lunch. Reservations for lunch should be made through Wm. P. Smith III, Box 133, Tupelo, 38802, by May 2, phone 842-8164.

Area V will hold two meetings: First Church, Vicksburg, March 21, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. with Cortez Hutchinson Jr., of Yazoo City and Ethel McKeithen, Jackson, as resource persons. A second rally will be held in Rankin Association, April 20. The associational bulletins for Warren-Yazoo and Rankin Associations will carry details for these sessions.

## Staff Changes

David Allen has resigned as pastor of Shuqualak Church, Noxubee Association, to accept the call of Shiloh Church, Tuscaloosa Association in Alabama.

Allen and his wife, Debbie, have one son, Jonathan, age 2.

Bernette Fielder has resigned Gore Springs Church, Grenada Association to become pastor of Bethany Church, Calhoun County. He served as pastor of Gore Springs eight and a half years. He began his duties at Bethany on Jan. 3.

He and his family were given a "pounding" in the fellowship hall of the church after the evening service.

Gary O'Neal Lawson, a native of Rosedale, has been called as pastor of Friendship Church in Geneva, Ala. A student at Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, Fla., he plans to graduate in May, 1988, with a bachelor of theology degree.

He and his wife, Audie, have two daughters, Hope and Shelby.

First Church, Ocean Springs, has called Bruce Hennington as minister of education and youth. Hennington, a native of Terry, is a graduate of William Carey College and received his master of religious education

degree at New Orleans Seminary. His new address is 1102 Bowen Avenue, Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

Lebron Matthews has accepted the call of First Church, Mount Olive, Covington Association, to serve as its pastor. He goes to Mount Olive from DeSoto Church, Shubuta.

He and his wife, Pam, have four children, Anessia, 12; Andrea, 10; Audrey, 6; and Andrew, 9 months.

Dennis Ray Smith has accepted the position of associate pastor with emphasis in outreach and senior adults



Smith

at First Church, Pascagoula. While accepting this position he leaves the area of youth and activities where he has served the last three years. His former work was with Carterville Church, Petal. He received his education from William Carey College and has attended New Orleans Seminary. Smith is married to the former Cheri Causey and they have three children. Dennis L. Johnsey is pastor.

## Religious broadcasters meet

Accountability will be the primary order of business when religious broadcasters gather in the nation's capitol Jan. 30-Feb. 3, for the 45th annual convention of National Religious Broadcasters.

In addition to voting on two proposals related to self regulation and strict new enforcement measures, religious broadcasters will hear Billy Graham address the issues of financial and moral accountability from a biblical perspective, and will discuss other facets of accountability in numerous workshops.

One proposal would make full disclosure of financial operations

mandatory for members in NRB. Full disclosure under the terms of EFICOM includes information on compensation of a ministry's officers and principal on-air participants, sources of income, expenditures, financial audits by an outside firm, and methods of fund raising.

In order to receive the organization's seal of approval, broadcast ministries must make financial statements available to the public and must have a board of at least five directors with the majority of board members not related to ministry executives and not on the ministry staff.

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## Just for the Record



**Strayhorn Church, Sarah,** burned the note of its sanctuary, Nov. 22, which was built 10 years ago under the leadership of Cecil Cole. Earl Kelly delivered the dedication message. The committee that led in the project was J. B. Petrea, Jack Houston, Ronnie Smith, Benford Ash, and James Rhodes (deceased).

Pictured, left to right, are Jack Houston, J. B. Petrea, Ronnie Smith, and in the background, J. F. Pinkerton, pastor.



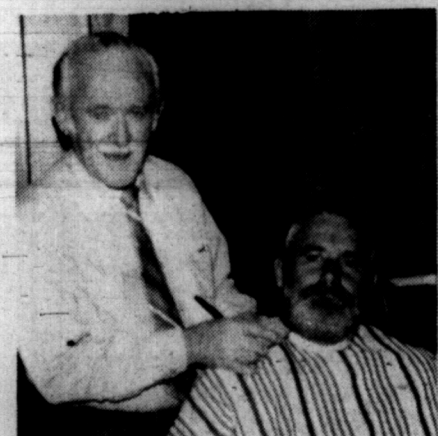
**Mt. Nebo Church, Newton County,** held its first GA Recognition Service on Dec. 2. The theme for the service was "Tell the Good News."

Ten girls received mission adventure badges. Pictured, left to right (back row) are Amy Smith, LeeAnn Davis, Kim Smith, Susan George (front row) April Burke, Jennifer Crabtree, Susie Smith, and Tammy Crabtree. Not pictured: Jessica Harris and Tracy Allbrook.



The GAs at Temple Church, Pascagoula, were recognized during their GA Recognition Service. The theme for the service was "Showing Love through Actions."

Pictured, front row, are Leah Riley, Tracy Butler, Ginger Ruemenapp, LaShea Lowe, and April Ruemenapp. Back row, Crystal Holt, Tiffany Wilson, and Kim Dowdy. Leaders are DeAnne Riley and Marie Rich.



The beards come off at Pearl Hill Church, Leake Association. The men at the church started in August growing beards vowing not to shave unless the \$2500 goal was reached in November. The fundraiser was to raise money to pay on the building debt. "Old Fashion Day" was observed in November. The women and girls wore long dresses and bonnets. The men had beards and wore overalls. When the offering was counted, \$2,512.13 had been received — therefore, the beards came off! Pictured are Glyn Carico, barber and Lacy Perry, seated. Eddie Pilgrim is pastor.

## Conference to spotlight small church

The next Small Church Leadership Conference will take place Feb. 13 at First Church, Charleston. This is one of a series of leader training programs for churches with 150 or fewer enrolled in Sunday School.

Target churches for this meeting will be those in Attala, Bolivar, Carroll, Grenada, Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Montgomery, North Delta, Northwest, Panola, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, and Washington associations. There are 177 churches in these associations.

The program will take place 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. with lunch provided

by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's program director's office which is led by Chester Vaughn. There will be music, preaching, and specialized training conferences in 23 areas of church leadership.

These areas will have sessions: pastors; deacon chairmen; Sunday School directors, adult, youth, children's, and preschool Sunday School workers; WMU directors;

Baptist Women leaders; Baptist Young Women's leaders; Acteen, GA, and Mission Friends leaders; Baptist Men and RA leaders; volunteer music directors; church pianists; preschool/children's music workers; Church Training directors; adult, youth, children's and preschool Church Training leaders.

For lunch reservations, contact the associational office by Feb. 8.

### Hardy Church, Grenada awards scholarships

The ministerial scholarship committee of Hardy Church, Grenada on behalf of the membership, has awarded two \$250 scholarships.

These scholarships are given each year to ministerial students who are selected by the committee and approved by the membership. Applications are made available to Clarke College, Mississippi College, William Carey College, and Blue Mountain College. Awards are made available on Jan. 1 each year and can be applied to semester tuition credit chosen by the recipient.

Chosen as a recipient this year is Martin James Romero of Newton and a student at Clarke College. Romero and his wife, Pat, have three children, Anthony, 10, Jonathan, 3, and Kimberly, 2. He attends Society Hill Church, Oakvale.

Also chosen as a recipient is Scott Warren Hamric of Terry, who is a senior at Mississippi College. He and his wife are parents of two children, Gregory Dane, 4, and Jeffery Kyle, 5 months. Hamric is pastor of Bethesda Church, Terry.

## Unified gifts lag behind

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptists' national Cooperative Program unified budget has topped \$30 million for the first quarter of its fiscal year, but the pace lags behind 1986-87.

December receipts brought the three-month total to \$30,115,637, or 2.81 percent behind the total for the same period a year ago, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the convention's Executive Committee.

The conventionwide December total was \$9,605,681, Bennett reported. That amount is 7.43 percent behind the \$10,376,194 received in December 1986.

"I am disappointed in the December Cooperative Program total," he said, also expressing concern over the first-quarter total, since it reflects almost a three percent drop from 1986-87.

The December downturn may be explained by the absence of a "13th check" from one of the larger Southern Baptist state conventions, noted Tim A. Hedquist, Executive Committee vice president for business and finance. That state contributed a bonus 13th monthly check — totaling about \$1.2 million — to the Cooperative Program in December 1986 but did not repeat the procedure in 1987.

The 1987-88 Cooperative Program goal is \$140 million.

### Missionary News

Glenn and Cindy Graves, missionaries to the Dominican Republic, have arrived at language school (address: Spanish Language Institute, P. O. Box 52-2628, Miami, Fla. 33152). He was born in Clarksdale, Miss., and she, the former Cindy Boyd, in Richmond, Va. Both consider Sparta, N.C., their hometown.

Ronnie and Beth Parker, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: 407 N. 38th Ave., Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401). He was born in Hattiesburg and also lived in Long Beach, Gulfport and Biloxi, Miss., and Huntsville, Ala., while growing up. The former Beth Colletti, she was born in New Orleans, La., and lived in Hattiesburg and Biloxi, Miss., and Mims, Fla., while growing up.

## Stanton Church missions goal met with innovative plan

By Carolyn Harper

How was the Stanton Church in Natchez ambitious goal for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering of \$350 exceeded by almost \$300?

At the suggestion of Stanton's pastor, Steve Purvis, a unique and highly successful program to promote this mission offering was initiated.

First, the children began in October bringing pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters to place in a coffee can at children's church each Sunday. Some children took from their savings.

Some adults brought rolls of coins they had saved for several months and others reached into their pockets and purses to contribute whatever coins they had on what was called "Loose Change Sunday."

On the Sunday designated as "Dollar Bill Sunday," dollar bills overflowed the offering plates.

This was followed by "Family Five Dollar Bill Sunday."

On a Wednesday night near Christmas, the WMU presented a program on foreign missions using a large wall hanging depicting the theme "Give a gift of life to the children of the world." As each level of contributions was reached, another nationality of people in the world was shown as reached with the light of Christ.

Then, to complete their giving in the true spirit of Christmas, a "Birthday Party for Jesus" was held. "The Life of Jesus," a Christmas play, portrayed by the members and children of the church was presented, followed by a fellowship and thanksgiving to God for a wonderful year. Additional family gifts to foreign missions were given at this time.

Pastors — Staff — Lay Leaders  
Invited

**State**

**EVANGELISM  
CONFERENCE**

**February 1-3, 1988**

**Parkway Baptist Church  
Jackson, Mississippi**

**Monday, 6:30 p.m. til noon Wednesday**

**Hear**

**Perry Sanders**  
**Manuel Scott**  
**O. S. Hawkins**  
**Larry Lewis**

**Tom Eliff**  
**Frank Pollard**  
**John Bramlett**  
**Russell Newport**  
**and others**



# Mission Gifts Of Mississippi Baptist Churches Thru Convention Board

**Jan. 1, 1987-Dec. 31, 1987**

Assn. Miss. Designated, WMU & All				Assn. Miss. Designated, WMU & All				Assn. Miss. Designated, WMU & All				Assn. Miss. Designated, WMU & All			
Co-op		Other	Total	Co-op		Other	Total	Co-op		Other	Total	Co-op		Other	Total
<b>ADAMS</b>															
ADAMS	2,272.06	959.92	3,137.88	NEW HAVEN	1,537.75	1,472.97	3,010.72	RIVERSIDE	1,609.59	1,940.99	3,541.58	JONES	1,554.16	200.00	1,754.16
BETHLEHEM	766.48	605.89	1,372.37	NEW ZION	1,369.22	844.37	2,213.59	ROBINSON RD CPT	1,049.45	1,133.36	2,182.81	BETHLEHEM	1,554.16	200.00	1,754.16
BETHLEHEM	766.48	605.89	1,372.37	PROVIDENCE	1,369.22	844.37	2,213.59	SHADON	1,049.45	1,133.36	2,182.81	BETHLEHEM	1,554.16	200.00	1,754.16
BETHLEHEM	766.48	605.89	1,372.37	WEIR	1,369.22	844.37	2,213.59	SHILOH MEMORIAL	1,049.45	1,133.36	2,182.81	BETHLEHEM	1,554.16	200.00	1,754.16
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BETHLEHEM	766.48	605.89	1,372.37	WEIR	1,369.22	844.37	2,213.59	SHILOH MEMORIAL	1,049.45	1,133.36	2,18				



# ard

**Jan. 1, 1987-Dec. 31, 1987**

Assn. Miss.  
Designated,  
WMU & All

LEBANON

Co-op	Other	Total
1,207.00	1,243.25	2,450.25
56,997.42	1,243.25	58,240.67
3,200.00	1,617.29	4,817.29
17,950.00	1,617.29	19,567.29
7,556.67	3,353.99	10,910.66
87,041.11	81,005.00	168,046.11
4,050.20	2,901.11	6,951.31
1,255.47	868.88	2,124.35
1,067.41	1,493.02	2,560.43
14,374.96	50.00	14,424.96
720.00	50.00	770.00
14,550.52	3,980.00	18,530.52
62,472.80	102,295.91	164,768.71
6,569.16	3,299.17	9,868.33
6,465.16	3,299.17	9,764.33
289.57	349.13	638.70
47,379.06	15,690.65	63,069.71
2,789.39	1,553.44	4,342.83
2,750.00	15,494.34	18,244.34
19,929.31	10,812.72	30,742.03
23.35	89.47	112.82
21.00	85.95	106.95
7,417.94	10,070.23	17,488.17
121.10	1,553.44	1,674.54
60.39	1,617.29	1,677.68
27,439.81	11,046.66	38,486.47
11,949.23	1,775.82	13,725.05
561.907.28	319,581.26	881,488.54

Assn. Miss.  
Designated,  
WMU & All

MONROE

Co-op	Other	Total
652.52	3,193.01	3,845.53
822.00	745.00	1,567.00
1,915.00	1,915.00	3,830.00
30,507.00	1,907.00	32,414.00
187,561.16	112,373.86	299,935.02
3,662.15	2,179.21	5,841.36
5,681.80	8,965.28	14,647.08
611.50	923.92	1,535.42
9,927.00	2,850.41	12,777.41
10,420.00	1,227.93	11,647.93
52,924.26	41,702.00	94,626.26
101,000.00	1,227.93	102,227.93
2,062.89	4,404.33	6,467.22
1,500.00	239.42	1,739.42
747.80	984.95	1,732.75
19,710.26	11,603.84	31,314.10
1,223.30	2,500.00	3,723.30
9,998.00	10,742.00	20,740.00
686.12	686.12	1,372.24
5,497.42	2,500.00	7,997.42
1,986.00	1,523.00	3,509.00
20,037.99	5,657.11	25,695.10
51,729.65	1,729.65	53,459.30
677.31	750.06	1,427.37
253,451.78	188,822.97	442,274.75

Assn. Miss.  
Designated,  
WMU & All

PANOLA

Co-op	Other	Total
880.00	928.13	1,808.13
40,201.45	1,541.45	41,742.90
1,050.00	1,050.00	2,100.00
1,975.00	1,675.00	3,650.00
13,247.97	1,764.75	15,012.72
108,972.58	18,298.23	127,270.81
1,594.00	510.60	2,104.60
3,605.84	510.60	4,116.44
2,202.81	1,379.16	3,581.97
50.02	1,379.16	1,429.18
4,844.52	266.50	5,111.02
6,693.33	7,613.26	14,306.59
61.25	7,613.26	7,674.51
226,137.16	101,035.50	327,172.66
4,437.30	3,985.04	8,422.34
4,320.15	803.40	5,123.55
2,039.30	2,902.40	4,941.70
5,612.90	3,383.50	8,996.40
549.25	1,122.00	1,671.25
1,529.10	856.36	2,385.46
89,220.00	118,522.84	207,742.84
24,553.81	12,154.62	36,708.43
591.83	1,011.02	1,602.85
1,175.91	1,011.02	2,186.93
2,927.69	518.00	3,445.69
263.10	2,427.00	2,690.10
4,440.42	1,934.27	6,374.69
103.00	103.00	206.00
2,811.15	803.83	3,614.98
3,072.00	3,072.00	6,144.00
100.00	25.00	125.00
3,996.00	25.00	4,021.00
5,830.30	1,604.26	7,434.56
2,588.24	726.42	3,314.66
1,200.00	3,967.73	5,167.73
2,529.35	451.12	2,980.47
174,288.79	72,301.67	246,590.46

Assn. Miss.  
Designated,  
WMU & All

PEARL RIVER

Co-op	Other	Total
9,167.78	4,851.14	14,018.92
7,112.97	4,052.98	11,165.95
2,161.00	2,161.00	4,322.00
1,404.54	1,289.99	2,694.53
763.45	520.24	1,283.69
2,134.14	2,134.14	4,268.28
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# Jacob's flight from Laban

By Gayle Alexander  
Genesis 31:1-55

Jacob had to leave home once again. However, this time, it was through no sin problem of his own. Earlier Jacob had asked for the privilege of leaving, and Laban, realizing that he had become wealthy because of the presence of Jacob, wanted to negotiate a further business deal. He offered to allow Jacob to name his wages. Immediately Jacob took advantage of the opportunity and decided to go in business for himself.

Jacob's unusual offer seemed to be completely in Laban's favor.

Immediately Laban accepted the offer and then proceeded to isolate, and take for himself, Jacob's choice of sheep that were not white and goats that were not black. So Jacob began with no capital at all. Jacob became wealthy through apparent selected breeding. Jacob's interpretation of this was that God caused the selective breeding. God could control which animals mated with which. Nevertheless, Laban's "countenance was not the same toward Jacob" (verse 2) because Jacob surpassed him in wealth.

Laban's jealousy and God's command "to return to the land of his fathers" (verse 3) prompted Jacob to move. Here again God pro-

## BIBLE BOOK

mised Jacob, "I will be with thee" (verse 3). Jacob made the preparations necessary for the journey back to his homeland. He realized that he needed the support of both his wives. In private, he shared with them the problem with Laban, and also, the command of God. Both wives gave him their immediate support for several reasons. Their father had deceived Jacob many times, changed his wages many times, and had been totally unfair toward him. Also, the 14 years of service for them was exorbitant.

Furthermore, the sale price for the daughters was to be kept in the event that something happened and the daughters were left on their own. Monies for their care would already be in place. However, Laban had used the proceeds for himself.

Jacob knew there would be trouble with his leaving. He had his family and his flocks ready to leave at a moment's notice. As soon as Laban left for sheep shearing festival, Jacob left. Jacob had a sizeable lead on Laban before he found out about Jacob's departure. Jacob's immediate goal was to reach the hill country east of the Jordan River.

Laban caught up with Jacob in seven days. God had appeared to Laban in a dream while in pursuit and warned him not to accuse Jacob

of wrongdoing, nor to do him harm. Laban obeyed and simply asked Jacob questions about apparent wrongdoing. Laban played the role of the wounded father and asked Jacob why he had acted so foolishly and caused him to suffer so much by not allowing him the opportunity of giving his family and grandchildren a royal farewell.

Jacob defended his actions through fear that he would come and take away his daughters by force. Laban could not deny the charge because he had come in pursuit with a large force of armed men.

Also, Laban brought up the question about the household gods having been stolen. Matters of wealth were in contention. Rachel had stolen the gods of her father and according to the Broadman Commentary of Genesis, p. 220, the possession of household gods was legal proof of the right of inheritance. Rachel was simply guaranteeing what she felt was hers. Jacob was in disbelief that anyone in the family would have taken them. He made a rather serious statement about the person suffering with his life if those gods were found in his possession. How humiliating to those gods for a woman in her monthly cycle to be sitting on them. However, the search failed to disclose that Rachel had them.

Jacob waxed eloquent in his vindication of his actions. He took great relish in venting pent-up emotions of 20 years. He was straightforward

in telling Laban about his years of misconduct, deception, and dishonesty. Fourteen of those years he had served for his two wives. Six years he had served for his cattle. Across those years Laban had changed his wages many times. Jacob attributed all of his success to God.

Jacob was truthful in his description of the life of a shepherd as labor. He lived with the sheep day and night, protected them from wild beasts, and helped them in bearing their young to prevent miscarriage. Furthermore, Jacob was not permitted to eat of the lambs. Also, he had to make good any losses.

Laban, realizing that he had been bested in the conflict, made a covenant with Jacob. He may have feared that Jacob would later return and exact more payment for his past injustices. A covenant was made and sealed with a meal from the slain animal. The covenant was one-sided. Jacob agreed to certain terms, but Laban had nothing at all to which he agreed. However, Jacob was willing still to make the covenant, and promised to take care of Laban's daughters. The name given to the stones erected as a memorial to the covenant was "Mizpah." Neither of them was to cross over the stones to harm the other. "The Lord watch over us while we cannot watch each other" (verse 49). This heap of stones would forever be a witness of this covenant and of the parting of Jacob and Laban.

Gayle Alexander is pastor, First, Tupelo.

# Carrying on Jesus' work

By Jimmy G. McGee  
Matthew 10:1, 5-20

When Jesus was here as God in man, the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. Because Jesus is still here in the Spirit's presence, the Kingdom of Heaven is always at hand. The followers of Jesus today have a vital part in communicating the claims of the King of the Kingdom to all people.

According to Matthew, Jesus shared his life with his disciples (learners) and involved them personally in sharing the same life with others.

"As you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give" (verse 7-8). His mandate is to preach — to herald the King's presence, for Jesus the Messiah is here! Their preaching would be accompanied with miracles just like those Jesus had already manifested (Jesus gave them power," v.1) and should

authenticate the message and make bold the disciples.

This first mission involving the twelve is restricted to "the house of Israel" — to the Jews only. Genuinely God-fearing Jews would be ready to understand and receive the message. The Jews had been preparing for this day for a long time, and some do believe. "Worthy" in verse 11 describes true God-fearing Jews. Generally, the Jews would prove themselves out of touch with God and would reject the message.

While Jesus was here, the Jews must have an advantaged opportunity to receive the gospel so that in their rejection the Gentiles will have an unlimited opportunity to receive the same grace and love. "Shaking off the dust" (verse 14) calls attention to an unbeliever's accountability.

"Freely you have received, freely give" describes the attitude of all Christian ministry. "Freely" is in the emphatic position and must be underscored. It characterizes the believer's

understanding of himself. He has not earned nor is he deserving of what he has received. "Freely received" refers to (1) the disciples standing with God in forgiveness and salvation, (2) his call to apostleship, and here (3) his empowering to perform miracles. The manner of one's receipt controls the manner of one's giving; freely pass it on to another. Every Christian is called to be a witness. Our mandate becomes a "have-to" responsibility in shared ministry. Unless one has this attitude — this inner response of gratitude to God's grace, the "have-to" responsibility will become a burdensome chore producing frustration, overriding guilt, and resignation. Christians are changed people; the change will manifest itself in this generous giving of whatever one receives of the Lord.

The special instructions for Christian witnessing are still relative. Simplicity, trust, and hospitality (verses 9-15) are indispensable to effective Christian work. The disciples' luggage is light and their lifestyle unencumbered with material treasures. Theirs is a real dependence on God, allowing others to share in the supply of their daily needs. They are to greet others in openness and to bestow the

blessing of peace on the ones receiving them. The materialistic lifestyle of many of us today challenges our devotion to Jesus, misdirects our interest in his Kingdom, and limits our freedom to witness effectively.

Finally, those sent out must be aware of the enmity of the world and the hatred to challenged traditionists. Jesus sent them out "as sheep in the midst of wolves" (verse 16). Here the "wolves" are hostile Jews — not Gentiles and not society in general — who feel threatened in their interpretation of scripture and in their lifestyle of self-righteousness and their supposed position with God.

Wherever one witnesses in truth for God today, Jesus' word is helpful. "Be wise as serpents" (use discretion as that of Matthew 7:6) and "harmless as doves" (blameless in retaliation as that of Matthew 7:12). "Do not worry:" do not anticipate restraint in advance, it may not happen; you cannot know in advance how you will face it; count on God, if you're there on his behalf, to supply your defense. Expect God to help you by the empowering of the Holy Spirit so you will know what to say and how to act.

Jimmy McGee is pastor, First, Grenada.

# Keep the Lord's day holy

By M. Dean Register

The fourth commandment is the longest of the ten and is an urgent call to "remember." Neurologists tell us that our brain behaves like a computer so that every experience is indelibly printed somewhere in our memory.

Hardly a day passes, however, that we do not bemoan our faulty memory. Most of us have forgotten where we put our keys, where we parked the car at a mall, what we did with the checkbook, and when we were supposed to attend a meeting. Albert Einstein was a genius, but often had difficulty remembering ordinary affairs. Memory is precious, but it requires constant practice.

The Hebrews were exhorted to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex 20:8). The act of remembering implied a conscious effort

## LIFE AND WORK

rather than mere mental recall. It involved a deliberate act of the whole person in reverence for God. Since the sabbath (the seventh) day was the one on which God rested after his creative work, man was exhorted to focus upon God and his majesty as creator and sustainer. The day served a two-fold purpose: (1) to exalt the holiness of God and (2) to underscore the sanctity of life for man.

Gradually, however, a principle of worship became a binding regulation. Well-intentioned Jewish leaders began to insist upon meticulous observance of the Sabbath. Numerous prohibitions against working on the Sabbath were prescribed. The people were forbidden to tie a knot, light a fire, move a candle, go on a journey, or prepare a meal. There was even a prohibition against healing. Literally, one could keep a sick man from getting worse, but one could

not help him get better.

A day designed to remember God and to protect the life of man became a day unfortunately burdened with laborious rules.

Jesus, however, did not observe all the Jewish rules. He ate on the Sabbath and he healed on the Sabbath (Luke 6). Furthermore, he pointed out that the day was made for man rather than man being made for the day.

For the early Christians another day became more important than the seventh day. In Acts 20:7 the believers met to worship on the first day of the week. Tertullian, a second century Christian leader described the Christians' day of worship as one of study, praise, prayer, fellowship, and moral instruction.

How then should we understand the Lord's day? First, we should realize that the Lord's Day is a gift we are to use responsibly. At the end of the day we ought to feel happy in presenting it to our Savior. Responsible living on the Lord's Day involves rest, but not inertia. After

all, Sunday can be abused as much by lying around the house as by running around the recreational pursuits.

Second, we should understand it as a day of celebration in worship. Heb. 10:24-25 reminds us not to forsake our assembly with fellow believers. We need each other and the encouragement that comes from the preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. Celebration is what I call a "glad essential" of worship. Joy has long been a characteristic of Christians in fellowship with one another.

Third, we can think of Sunday as our testimony day. It is the day set aside in which we bear witness to the life-changing power of Jesus Christ. Obviously, every day needs to be a day of witness, but Sunday especially, because as the first day it initiates a new week. What a thrill to rest, to worship, to fellowship with the people of God and to breathe the invigorating air of victory in Jesus!

Dean Register is pastor, First, Gulfport.



# Baptist Record

## Thai boy learns books, earns Bible for father

By Maxine Stewart

To encourage some of the rural lay-leaders and pastors in the Nong Nok Khao (Dove Swamp) area to learn the books of the Bible, in order to be bet-

ter able to use their Bibles more quickly in finding Scriptures, for the first time ever missionary Bob Stewart offered as an award a Thai Bi-

ble, a Thai Bible dictionary, or Haley's Bible Handbook (in Thai) to anyone who would memorize the books of the Bible in order. Most of these men never completed more than the fourth grade (the required study) in school and that was years ago as the average age in the group is 41. Most of them have Bibles. All have New Testaments.

These men, for the most part, are farmers. Not just farmers, but poor farmers. There are times during the year when some of them eat only two meals a day because food is running low and cash is either low or non-existent until harvest.

One man, Wirat Pongkan, an epileptic, had been a Christian for about three years when this offer was made. He has been under treatment at Bangkla Baptist Hospital and his condition has greatly improved. He still has a problem, however, with stuttering and he would be the first to tell you he can't remember a lot of things.

Wirat cultivates a small piece of land, growing tapioca. When he is not busy in his field, he does day labor, hiring out doing odd jobs of cutting wood, working in other farmer's crops, or whatever work he can get.

When he first went to the Baptist hospital for treatment, he could hardly control his body. People who saw him there (non-medical) told him he would never be able to work or ride a bicycle (common transportation in rural Thailand) or anything like that.

At a revival in a neighboring community a few months later, Wirat gave a testimony praising the Lord for being able to get a bicycle a few weeks earlier.

The Christians in his nearby village meet only one Wednesday afternoon a month. Wirat, however, gathers the Christians (people he has won personally) in his immediate neighborhood together with his family every Sunday for singing, Bible study and prayer. After the study, he now gets on his bicycle and goes out witnessing the rest of the day. Whether the bicycle was a gift, whether he saved the money for it, worked it out, or bought it on credit, I don't know, but he has a bicycle which he is able to ride well and use in his Christian witnessing. He gives praise to God for helping him physically as well as spiritually.

After Bob made his offer of Christian materials, Wirat excitedly approached him and said he really would like to have one of those Bibles. Bob learned he no longer had a Bible because he won a man to Christ just prior to that and he felt like that new believer needed a Bible, so he gave him their family Bible, the only one they owned. He explained to Bob he knew he couldn't learn the Books of



Wirat Pongkan and his wife, Poon, and their three children (left to right) Uayphon, Udom, and Amphan, attend a rally at Bangkla Baptist Church. (Photo by Maxine Stewart)

the Bible in order, but he would try to teach them to his little 8-year-old son if he would let that count. Bob accepted this, knowing it would also help Wirat learn something.

A few weeks later Wirat told Bob his son was ready. They planned to meet at the revival in Bangkla for him to hear the young boy recite. Because of other obligations, Bob was unable to attend the revival. Wirat's son, however, had an opportunity to share what he had learned with the Christians in Bangkla, giving a challenge to them.

The following week Wirat took his son to Nong Nok Khao to the four-day revival and leadership training where Bob would be teaching. The second night there was a power failure. Someone placed lighted candles in each window, giving a soft pleasant glow throughout the auditorium. Bob thought this an appropriate time for the young boy to be the first to say the books of the Bible. Without hesitation the lad went to the platform.

The boy started off with several scripture verses he had also memorized, verses his dad wanted him to know and have in his heart. He then went into the books of the Old Testament, starting out differently to the way most Americans memorize these books. He said, "Bur nung — PRATOMAKAN (Number one — Genesis), bur song — OPAYOP (number two — Exodus), bur sum — LAWINITI (number three — Leviticus), bur si — GUNDUNWITEE (number 4 — Numbers), but ha — CHALEITHAMBANYAT (number five — Deuteronomy), numbering each book before calling the name of the Book of the Old Testament.

He then started over in the New Testament. "Bur nung — MATTHAI (number one — Matthew), bur song — MARROGO (number 2 — Mark), bur sum — LUKA (number three — Luke), bur si — YOHON (Number four — John), bur ha — GITCHAGUN (number five — Acts) right on through all the New Testament. He didn't miss a book, stammer, stutter, halt, miss a beat or anything. He did a remarkable presentation. As he finished, everyone broke into a joyous applause. Wirat was a happy man! Now his family would have a Bible again.

As Bob was preparing to leave Nong Nok Khao at the end of the school, Wirat approached him again and said, "Acharn (preacher or teacher), I real-

ly could use a Bible dictionary. If I can teach my little girl the books of the Bible too, (she is older than her brother) would you let that count? Bob assured him it would. He was aware this would be additional help for Wirat. In a few short weeks she recited all the books of the Bible, equally as well as her brother. (This is a close-knit family and the children knew they had helped their father.)

Missionaries learned long ago it is not always wise to go about handing out Christian books that are costly to print. They have been known to end up in the market with the pages being used to make paper sacks for produce. Older missionaries advised it is better to let the people buy or earn Bibles and other books. If it costs them something, even a small amount, they seem to appreciate and treasure it more. (It also helps to keep their pride intact.) This is why Wirat didn't ask outright for a "free" Bible after he gave his away. When the extremely poor purchase a Bible or Thai hymnal or other Christian books, the price is most always reduced, sometimes considerably, yet they still have a part in purchasing or earning it. Some are given totally free (usually in private), but this is the exception.

Maxine Stewart is missionary press representative in Thailand.



Missionary Maxine (Mrs. Bob) Stewart plays the RANATEK, a Thai musical instrument, as she participates in a concert arranged by the Fine Arts Department's Division of Music and Drama in Bangkok, Thailand, to celebrate King Bhumiphol Adulyadej's 5th cycle (60th) birthday. (Photo by Bob Stewart)

## Moscow church baptizes converts, others are growing

MOSCOW, USSR — One hundred fifty-three persons were baptized into the Central Baptist Church in Moscow in 1987. About forty youth were among those baptized. Several members of this active, growing church work as pastors, others with the Bible correspondence courses. However, this growth and enthusiasm is not limited to the capital city.

Orel: Twenty-two new members were baptized into the local Baptist church. Kaluga: The church here celebrated its 70th anniversary in October, 1987, and the church membership now stands at 200. The congregation has a large number of youth and good choirs.

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